

A LEISURE HOUR'S READING

DENIS.
A ROMANCE.
CHAPTER II.

(Continued from last week's issue.)

There was a moment's almost involuntary pause; and then, not meeting the glad young eyes turned on him, "Mr. Hallwell?" said the stranger, interrogatively.

"You wish to see me?" the quick boyish tones questioned.

And on receiving a reply in the affirmative, the two turned away together in the direction of the lawn, its overshadowing cedar, the impatient, eager steps of Vincent Hallwell strivings to keep pace with the slow feet of his companion.

Fully two hours later the door of the sitting-room was slowly opened, and Vincent Hallwell, standing on the threshold, saw, as Robert Jardine had done, the white figure in the faint of sunlight.

But the brilliancy all around seemed to mock at the despairing, drooped head, at the fading toes; and noting all this, it was with a cry of pain that he flung himself on his knees, and with his face hidden in the slender hands on her lap, he burst into tears.

Silence those burning tears, with what a pang, who can say? but no word escaped her; though presently, as he did not move, she with her left hand, on which an opal ring—his ring—shimmered, gently smoothed his ruffled fair hair with a tender, caressing movement.

"At length—"You have conquered," he said, not looking up. "When you speak to me, and pray of me to go, I can do nothing but obey you, though it is to my own misery—and I believe, too, yours. But," raising his head, "should you ever repent, you swear you will let me know?" Denis, passionately taking her hand in his, "swear to me that the very moment you learn you are free, you will send for me. Be it tomorrow or twenty years hence—let me be in England, or hundreds of miles away—write but the one word 'come,' and as swiftly as I can be by your side, so swiftly may you count upon me."

"I swear it, Vin," she answered low, her hand in his. "And if you do not come will forgive you; and if you do—oh—" breaking off, "say good-bye, I cannot bear it!"

"It is only at your bidding that I say it all," he said. "Ushay your words even now. Consider—for my sake, for your own sake."

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